

EUTERPE
OR
THE FUTURE OF ART

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

*A Full List of the Series will be found at
the end of this Volume*

EUTERPE

OR

THE FUTURE OF ART

BY

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I

At the outset it will be desirable to state that when I speak of the future of art I do not mean the "art of the future". Art can be considered from either an inside or an outside point of view; that is to say, we can deal either with its nature, problems, and performances—art itself, or with the amount and quality of the interest taken in art by men and women—the "art life" of the community. The latter subject is that dealt with here.

The "art life" of the civilized world is at present in a transition period, which is fraught with distinct, though maybe unrealized, dangers. Its problems are only indirectly related to the present and the future state of art-production: whether we foresee development or retrogression in modern tendencies in literature,

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painting, music, and so on, these dangers will need to be faced, or they will, at least, minimize the value of the creative work of to-morrow. For we are concerned not with the production of art but with the enjoyment and appreciation of art. As the latter is the more important, since without it production would be sterile, it is an essential preliminary that the conditions necessary for the healthy growth of a more widespread, deeper-rooted love of the beautiful should exist. We are now viewing the situation as sociologists, as men, rather than as artists. The artist can be satisfied when he attains a certain level of performance: at least he can work with content and happiness while he is seeking to reach a may-be unattainable perfection. He is, naturally and rightly, concerned with absolute values; and the critic and the individual lover can maintain the same attitude. If a painting or a poem reaches perfection, he asks no more. But the sociologist must take a different attitude. To the artist and the critic the work is the end; to the sociologist it is the beginning. It is not enough for him to know that the painting is great, since to him it is only

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the means by which men attain artistic enjoyment; it has no significance until it has acted upon the minds of men. That being so he must ask other questions about it—firstly, *How many* men can see it? How many are able to appreciate its value intelligently, gaining the full aesthetic, spiritual, or intellectual stimulus from it?—in short, What is the aggregate of its human significance?

It does not follow, of course, that we can relate the quality of a work of art to the "quantity" of its appeal; it would, in fact, be absurd to suppose that it is necessarily better that 100,000 should know and appreciate the second-rate than that 100 should love the finest—neither, with certain reservations, need this necessarily be untrue. The point I would urge at present is simply that the value of art to humanity does depend very largely upon the desire and opportunity of men to take advantage of it. The poet whose works are ignored saving by the very few may be as impotent as a mute inglorious Milton.

Therefore there are two factors—production and reproduction, or, shall we say, creation and distribution. A musician

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composes a symphony, a dramatist writes a play, a novelist a story—that is the first factor. If no one ever performed the symphony, produced the play, or published the novel, of what importance would this creation prove to the world?—Practically none. The art-product must be distributed before it can accomplish any part of its essential purpose. It necessarily follows, moreover, that the *wider* the distribution, the more adequately will it function. This is all very obvious, though often forgotten, and will disclose the next step in the argument, which is that, were it not for certain tendencies, increased means of reproduction and distribution would lead to a better developed, more valuable, and more active artistic life. That being so, the present, which is a period when mankind is enjoying the benefit of recent and important reproductive inventions, should be imbued with hopeful tendencies—Is it?

Yes and no. Let us take stock of our position. Reproduction is almost entirely a mechanical matter, depending upon non-artistic, purely material factors. Production is the business of the creative artists; reproduction that of the scien-

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tists. The latter have given us within recent years inventions which have revolutionized artistic conditions—the mechanical processes and innumerable secondary inventions such as stereotyping, and mechanical composition and binding, which have facilitated the reproduction of printed matter, the three-colour and other photo-mechanical methods of reproducing pictorial matter, the gramophone, the piano-player, and wireless to aid the distribution of music, and so on, throughout the range of pure and applied art.

Until recent years the percentage of the population who were in direct contact with the fine arts had remained much the same in civilized countries from probably the earliest times. Art had almost invariably depended upon direct patronage of some kind or other, religious or secular, if not entirely at least to an important degree. I would not denounce this; one cannot, when one remembers that the system fostered art which has not been equalled under the new régime. But direct patronage by the few is rapidly declining and is to-day almost negligible. It has been replaced, simply as a result of the mechanical factor, by a more demo-

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cratic economic basis. Some arts are still to some extent produced for the few, but others entirely for the many. The important fact is that wherever reproduction is easiest that art is the most democratic—books and music, for example; wherever least possible its range is narrower and its support less democratic, e.g., sculpture, household decoration, etc.

The character of our artistic experience has therefore to a very large extent been decided by purely non-artistic factors. That which *can* be reproduced has been reproduced, and opportunity has developed taste. This is a generalization, though not a fallacious one. We may assume that the artistic needs of men have been led into their different channels partly as a result of personal inclination, but very largely through the influence of opportunity. If a number of men were cast upon a desert island with only books to minister to their aesthetic needs, the majority would take what was to hand and be quite content. I am not saying that this is a good tendency but that it is a true hypothesis, applicable to modern life, and a contention which is

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tenable on historical grounds. The favourite pursuits of early civilizations were not those of to-day, and it is very unlikely that any one factor has done so much to change taste as the development of means of reproduction. The pursuit of once-popular arts need not die out; it need not even decline, since the numbers of those interested in all the arts is increasing; but the proportionate or relative interest alters. This being so, can we ignore the influence of the mechanical factor? It is operating in a striking manner to-day when *relatively* music is being appreciated by more and literature by fewer people, when the theatre is attracting, relatively again, fewer every day than the cinema, when the graphic arts are becoming more significant than the plastic arts.

To ignore the mechanical factor is to put effect before cause. Certainly the character of taste has influenced the direction of invention to some extent, since the scientist would naturally turn first to fields where his work would be most effective. This aspect should not, however, be magnified. Sooner or later science has given all it was capable of giving to

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every form of art, regardless of its importance or popularity.

And so we realize that the *character* of public taste—that is to say, the proportionate amount of interest in the various arts—has been dictated by the mechanical factor. We can go still further and assert that its *quality* has been largely determined by this same influence.

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II

Before we can appreciate the truth of that assertion—that the quality of public taste has been influenced by mechanical methods of reproduction—we must be prepared to view the art life of the community as a whole. Too often we tend to regard only the better elements, the top layer, and to ignore the lower strata. We segregate a section of the populace—that which appreciates, or pretends to appreciate, Art (with a capital A)—and forget that the remainder, which indulges in jazz, 'the pictures', light fiction, Bovril pictures, and tin-chapel architecture, is actuated by the same motives. The quality of their artistic experiences and the standard of their taste and artistic education may be very different, yet they seek the same kind of experience as the others. It is entirely a matter of degree.

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Therefore we must regard the art-life of a community, as we must and do regard its social, religious, or political life, as comprising a little good, much bad, and more that is indifferent. Once this is realized, and only then, the full significance of the mechanical factor is apparent.

Let us go back to the pre-mechanical era, when only a small number of people had any opportunity for contact with art and only a few had developed a love for and the ability to appreciate its higher manifestations. At the same time a similarly limited populace found satisfaction in the second, third—and fifth-rate. Probably then, as now, more enjoyed the second-best than the finest, and so on, though probably the contrast was not so great as it is now. However that may be, when a new reproductive process was introduced it was naturally applied to the lower types rather than to the better, for an obvious reason. It enabled *more people* to be brought into contact, and these newcomers must naturally be unaccustomed to and incapable of appreciating the best. The education of taste is a slow process,

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whereas the new invention was a sudden force, applied immediately in whatever direction offered it the greatest scope. And so we find at once an increase in the lower grades of appreciation which is out of proportion to the benefits bestowed upon the higher.

The trouble did not end there, however. Greater familiarity tends to form taste, especially in these matters. Art serves most men chiefly as a luxury, a relaxation, a recreation ; and in our quest for these we are apt to take that which is most easily obtained. The mechanical factor, by making the fourth-rate accessible, *generated a desire for the fourth-rate* : this desire stimulated further reproduction, and this, in turn, brought more into the artistic fold, at each step lowering the quality of the most accessible and the most desired.

The result is that to-day the average quality of the whole artistic consumption of the populace is considerably lower than it had ever been before in civilized times. Though every day more and more people are reading some kind of printed matter, witnessing plays—silent and audible—of a sort, looking at pictures,

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penny plain or twopence coloured, though the time is not far distant when every man will be interested to some extent in art in one or other of its forms, our art-life is developing not so much in quality as in quantity.

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III

There is, of course, a bright side to the picture, and lest we be accused of pessimism it will be well to discuss this now.

In the first place all forms of art, good, bad, and indifferent, have benefited by mechanical means of reproduction. The actual numbers of those who can experience the finest things in art have increased manifold, and to that extent, the art-life of the world is better off than before. My only contention is that *proportionately* fewer appreciate the best, though *actually* more do so. My only intention here is to point out the essentially *quantitative* tendencies of to-day, lest we should mistake them for something better. Quantity alone is not everything, and, if we fail to realize these tendencies and endeavour to counteract their undesirable features, the time will come when the disproportion between those who seek the worthy and

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those who do not will be very dangerous. Why this will be so I hope to show in the next chapter.

To return to the bright side—Though quantity is not everything, it is something. It is better that people should appreciate the lowest arts than that they should ignore them altogether. Provided, of course, that any art is not definitely decadent and degenerate, it is better than none. But even this aspect has its disadvantages. It might be argued, not without reason, that it is more difficult to wean a person from the poor thing he knows and has come to like than to introduce an absolutely artistically-uneducated person to the moderately good. Of that, however we shall speak later.

Thirdly, improved reproductive methods have enriched art by enabling minorities to flourish.

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IV

And so we approach the real danger, which is naturally more potent in some fields than in others. We have seen that the mechanical factor has, by making the fourth-rate more accessible, increased the number of those with fourth-rate tastes. Now we encounter the commercial factor which enters at some stage into every art and almost every artistic activity. Books, music, and pictures must be published, plays produced, concerts arranged, art-objects manufactured, and so on. Outlay of capital is almost invariably involved, and those with capital can seldom be induced to use it without the usual expectation of gain. In short, to some person or other nearly *all our artistic experiences are business propositions*. Practically the only exceptions to this rule are the institutions maintained at the public expense—art-galleries, museums, public libraries, etc.—and even

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these are not entirely divorced from indirect commercial relationships.

Thus the nature and extent of art-reproduction are very largely governed by commercial considerations. The effect of this is easily seen. The natural desire of the capitalist is to secure the best return from his investment, and this may be sought in two ways. Either he may produce something for which there is a large demand, or he may produce something for which there is less demand and charge more for it. He will certainly avoid the thing for which there is only a small or a problematic demand. Let us now remember that the proportion of those who desire good art is decreasing, and it is clear that the commercial factor is not improving the standard of public taste. Within limits the most demand is for the least worth-while, and yet it is the satisfaction of this demand which makes the most attractive commercial proposition. He who wants the fine thing prized by a minority must pay more for it if he is lucky enough to be able to do so and if he is fortunate enough to have it produced for him, or go without it if he is not.

The snowball rolls on. The vicious

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sequence operates continuously. The bigger the demand the more ready is the business man to meet it; the better the supply, the greater the desire.

The extent to which the commercial factor is potent varies considerably, and depends largely upon the amount of capital which is involved in the single reproductive operation. Fortunately there are still business-men in the art-producing world who are glad to compromise, who sometimes put their ideals before their pockets, who are satisfied so long as they are enabled to pay their way, who are prepared at times to lose. Accordingly, whenever the capital involved is not large, and whenever the investor can undertake a number of contemporary ventures the loss on some of which should be covered by profits on the others, better though less popular art is given its chance.

Probably the most fortunate art in this respect is that of literature (in the widest sense of the word), and the most unfortunate the drama. The percentage of worthy books which remain unpublished is very low compared with that of plays or music, and even this percentage does not indicate the real difference,

since through lack of opportunity, the number of artists who devote their energies to composition or play-writing is much smaller than it should be. The reason is obvious. A small circulation will pay the cost of publishing the average book—a much smaller circulation (were it not for advertising expenses) than many imagine; on the other hand, commercial conditions being what they are, considerable public support is necessary if the producer of a play, a film, or an orchestral concert is to secure any financial gain. The publisher, moreover, does not put all his eggs into one basket; the producer of plays, unless he is in an unusually strong financial position, must. The former can afford to take occasional risks; the latter cannot.

Even in the case of books, however, the reader who seeks the same kind of reading as many millions of others is in a more favourable position than the man with individual, minority inclinations. The greater the volume of reproduction, the lower the cost per copy. Even were the business-man willing, he could not give the latter the full benefit of mechanical inventions. It would not be worth

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his while to do so. The complete utilization of mechanical methods involves the use of expensive plant, which is justified only when the output is large. It is, of course, a matter of degree, and many processes (e.g. machine-casing of books) can be applied as readily to the few as to the many. Other processes, on the contrary, never benefit the minority. In graphic art, for example, there are several colour-processes by which very cheap reproductions of pictures can be produced, but their use is, for necessary commercial reasons, confined to popular works. The pictures required by the few are never reproduced by these methods.

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V

We may now summarize the problem, before passing to a discussion of ways and means to counteract the dangerous tendencies of to-day.

Firstly—though creative artists and educationists must regard this as a hard saying—the most powerful force in the art-life of to-day is the purely mechanical factor.

Secondly, this factor is to a great extent determining the nature and amount of art-production and reproduction.

Thirdly, it is causing a decrease in the average quality of the total artistic life of the community.

Fourthly, this degeneration must naturally continue unless it is counteracted by other influences.

This statement is not an exaggerated one, and it does not ignore the good

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effects of the new order. Even though a certain amount of repetition is involved, it will be well to discuss in detail the causes of degeneration in popular tastes.

(1) Mechanical improvements were applied first to those grades of art which offered most scope to the commercial element (and are now still so applied to a greater extent).

(2) Even if, in the beginning, lower tastes were not in a majority, any widening of the circle of those interested would inevitably bring in a large percentage of the artistically uneducated.

(3) Each widening of the circle would involve a lowering of taste, and also increase the commercial inducement to cater for the lower grade.

(4) This being so, those with better tastes become an even smaller minority, and (though they probably would be *actually* better off) they become *relatively* at a disadvantage economically. Though they might now have to pay less than they had to before for something, they nevertheless still have to pay more than those who belong to the majority.

(5) Furthermore, the low grade is more accessible, easier to experience,

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more frequently offered than the better thing.

(6) Therefore, since (especially the large numbers whose tastes are on the border line) we unconsciously tend to follow the easy way, unless we deliberately seek to improve or maintain our taste, it will degenerate. It is necessary to remember that art is usually regarded as a recreation and, in spite of the saying that we take our pleasures sadly, we do often take a short view, and are satisfied to find that artistic recreation for the day which is first to hand, without thought of the morrow.

(7) In art-matters we are mostly conservative. Neither do we readily set ourselves apart from our fellows. The history of any "best seller" will prove this. Up to a point it is read by those who have discovered that they might like it; after that it is read chiefly "because everybody else is reading it". It is wrong to attribute this tendency to a mere desire to be "in the swim"; much more often it is because readers, unconsciously classing themselves as average, argue that the book which interests the average man will interest them. To a

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large extent this applies to all popular art. Few people care to "waste their time" experimenting when it is so much easier to fall in line with the crowd. The only wonder is how the popularity of the "best seller" and its kind begins: once that has happened the rest is a normal process.

(8) The average man, being thus willing to follow the dictates of the majority, is seldom likely to look elsewhere for his artistic experiences. And so the tastes of the majority are more firmly established—and the tastes of to-day form the tastes of to-morrow.

I would not describe this as a vicious circle. Rather is it a vicious spiral, the circumference of which ever increases. How can this state of affairs be altered?

Let us not be misunderstood. We are not asserting that this world with its many who appreciate the less valuable is worse than the world of the pre-mechanical era. Far from it. In every way it is better. The actual quantity of good artistic endeavour is much greater, and every increase in the numbers of those who appreciate the least worth while is a distinct gain to the community and to

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the individual. Our anxiety is not so much for to-day as for to-morrow. There is no reason to doubt that before long practically the whole population will be interested in some form and grade of art. It is then that the trouble will begin to assume serious proportions. Let us take a biological parallel. It is agreed that if good stocks do not increase at the same rate as inferior stocks they will gradually die out. If, in a world full of artistic endeavour the good artistic stocks are not as sturdy as the remainder, they too will in time die out. So long as the commercial and mechanical factors are allowed full play, the good artistic stocks will be at a disadvantage, and so the future of the finest elements of art depends upon the success of efforts to counteract these factors. We must find means (1) to make the most desirable art more accessible than it is now, and (2) to increase the numbers of those who desire it. The latter will serve two purposes : (a) it will help us in the first aim ; and (b) it will increase the aggregate quality and value of the artistic life.

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VI

We will deal with the second aim first, and it may be termed roughly "Education"—the process of increasing a man's ability to enjoy better art. The last phrase embodies our idea of the function of art-education. If education does that—improves the range and quality of his pleasure in the beautiful—it has performed its prime duty. Needless to say, we are not speaking now of that branch of education which concerns itself with the training of practitioners—creative or executive artists. That is quite a different matter, and one of our first quarrels with the present system is that these two types of education are not as clearly distinguished as they need to be.

There are two classes of people who will benefit by education—those who wish to enjoy and those who wish to practise. The needs of the two classes are quite distinct,

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yet he who would enjoy is often given the instruction provided (or which should be provided) for the others. The disadvantages of this are: (a) the enjoyer approaches the subject from quite a different angle, and practical instruction will sometimes depreciate his appreciative faculties. The outsider sees most of the game, and, moreover, one with knowledge of technical matters will tend to allow technical questions to come before purely aesthetic ones; (b) He will spend a great deal of time to no purpose, and will waste opportunities and leisure which could be more advantageously applied; (c) As he might be, and generally is, entirely devoid of sufficient creative or executive ability to practise to his own satisfaction a certain disappointment and disillusionment will colour his regard for the artistic; (d) It is useless and wasteful to give technical instruction to those who cannot and do not desire to apply it. Neither does the practitioner gain. There is a tendency to compromise, and so he does not always obtain the special purposive instruction he needs, and the personnel and institutions fitted to instruct the practitioner cannot devote all their

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energies to this essential work. Any increased love of art, be it remembered, will cause a much greater demand for professional creative and executive artists. And (e) he probably has neither the time nor the inclination for practical studies, and so, if there are no schemes specially for his benefit, he will receive no education at all.

Therefore there is a great need for systematic education in the appreciation of art. Many more attempts are being made to-day than there were a few years ago; yet the subject—a very difficult one—is still in its infancy. The methods and aims of such education have not yet been adequately formulated and must exercise educationists in the near future. Failing a well-defined plan, they have taken refuge in aspects of art-instruction which are not those best calculated to stimulate genuine enjoyment. This explains to some extent the confusion of practical and appreciative ends. It explains also our addiction to historical and theoretical studies. He who would study the graphic arts must try to draw and to paint; the music-lover must acquire some sort of executive ability, and so devotes enough time to the routine of "practice" to kill all his

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enthusiasm ; and the student of literature must become versed in its history. The art-lover is probably not getting much harm ; the music-lover is now often relieved by mechanical instruments from the necessity for technique ; than the historical studies of the last-named, however, nothing more dreary and futile could be invented.

Improvement in the methods of education in appreciation must involve the total abolition of the Examination system. Examinations may be able to show whether a man can draw "correctly", play the notes of a composition, or is versed in the dates of a number of writers and able to list their important works. But it cannot possibly give any indication whether the education in appreciation is achieving its real aim—the increase of the student's ability to enjoy more and better things, to find greater happiness and richer artistic experiences. Those who would develop the appreciative faculties of others must take the results of their labours for granted.

As before said, our ideas of how to instil a love of beauty, how to awaken interest in and arouse perception of artistic values, are still vague. It is a matter which cannot be taught by rule

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of thumb. It is not concerned with ascertained facts, nor discoverable by ordered experiment. It is an individual matter. Largely, in practice, such instruction will be exemplary rather than explanatory. Much of the time spent will be devoted to introducing to students actual examples of the art, and thereby the obstacles of ignorance and prejudice will be removed. In addition to this, however, some systematic instruction in the principles of aesthetics, of the general criteria of works of art—completeness, congruity, balance, and proportion, the subordination of details, the relation of means to ends—will be evolved. I would suggest as a starting-point the study of *form*, of the anatomy or architecture of art. Apart from the moral value of cultivating a sense of proportion, of perspective, of the inter-relation of parts—a sense which is as essential to a sane life as to the appreciation of a picture or a musical composition—nothing could lead more readily to an understanding of the artist's aims and plan of campaign. In music, for instance, a brief account of the sequence of the main themes, which could be memorized, would render intelligible and *whole* a composition which otherwise would seem meaningless, shapeless, and dreary.

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VII

The fact remains, however, that the percentage of the population which is affected by systematic education is, and is likely to remain, very, very small. The artistic regeneration of the world would be a very slow process if it depended entirely upon the existence of a definite desire for education. Before anyone will come into contact with educational institutions he must have attained to a relatively high standard of appreciation and he must be endowed already with considerable enthusiasm for art. The greater problems are clearly: (a) how to increase the interest of those who are almost if not entirely indifferent to the point when they *will* desire systematic instruction; and (b) how to benefit those who will never (maybe *can* never) reach even that stage, or who will prefer to "educate themselves".

As a preliminary to this it will be well

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to examine some of the causes of low taste. Why is it that millions enjoy *When it's Night-time in Italy*, but are bored to tears by the Schumann *A minor Concerto*? Why should *The Bat* have power to thrill them when *Macbeth* leaves them cold? Why, in short, do they prefer the least good to the best? I will not say "worst," because nothing is bad which artistically can give pleasure and morally is not evil.

The obvious reason, which most of us would give glibly, is that these people are intellectually and spiritually incapable of appreciating good art. How far this is true, and how far the other reasons I shall give are responsible, I would not care to suggest. Very probably it is true in the large majority of cases. In a world the majority of whose inhabitants are quite incapable of thinking intelligently or logically about the most important influences in their lives, where politics and religion and the fundamental human relationships are governed by ignorant prejudices and irrational habits, where a large proportion of men are mentally and physically below par, can we expect every man and woman to

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possess the latent ability to embrace the beautiful? However that may be, this obstacle to artistic education can be removed only by the sociologist, the educationist, the moralist, and the biologist. We who are concerned with the artistic factor can only presuppose the existence, now or to-morrow, of a germ of artistic impulse, since we can only influence those who are capable.

Secondly, as we noticed before, the greater familiarity and accessibility of the low grade is a potent hindrance to development.

Thirdly, we must remember that the average man seeks recreation when he embraces art. He may have degraded his idea of the recreational and come to think that unless an experience "liven's him up" or "takes him out of himself" it is not suitable recreation. The fact remains that as a rule he is unwilling to give the matter any sustained thought (even though exercising his mind might be a great change from the routine of manual labour), and he is satisfied if the day's leisure is passed pleasantly. The idea of sustained, cumulative recreation, such as is gained by the real lover of any

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art, when the pleasure of to-day adds to the recreative value of that of to-morrow, when each experience makes the following keener and more lasting, never occurs to him.

Again, he is conservative and plays for safety. Any improvement in taste would involve stepping on to fresh ground, and he is not prepared to do that. Somehow—generally by observing the likes and dislikes of people of similar mentality—he has discovered “what he likes”, and he sees no reason why he should take any risks. That is largely why he goes to see farces, reads detective yarns or tales of the wild and woolly West, and patronizes ballad-concerts and music-halls, but would never dream of venturing into a repertory theatre or a classical concert, or of reading a different type of book. His time, he thinks, and his money, are too precious for excursions into the unknown.

That alone would be sufficient deterrent, but, in addition, it sets up prejudices. He does not want to explore, yet he has (subconsciously, of course) to justify his conservatism. This he does by raising an imaginary barrier between the things he

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knows he likes and the things he doesn't know anything at all about and *might* not like. When he is brought face to face with the unknown, rather than confess his ignorance and lack of enterprise, even to himself, rather than admit that his tastes are low, he jumps to the conclusion that he is wise to be wary and that there must be some good reason for his attitude. Thus he sets his mind at rest by retarding its development.

Unfortunately there are outside influences which strengthen these prejudices. For instance, too many of those who appreciate, or pretend to appreciate, the best are apt to set themselves apart and to insist that there is an unbridgeable gulf between their art and that of the common herd. The average man hates this highbrow snobbery and hates, too, everything they are supposed to care for, since it is tarred with the same brush.

Then, again, attempts to "improve" his taste for him generally arouse his ire and invoke further prejudices—mainly because the would-be improvers do not go the right way to work. It is not at all difficult to realize that, since we all

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regard art as matter for the exercise of taste, which is an individual prerogative—there is no absolute scale of artistic values, though there is a general consensus of educated opinion—the man who will readily accept the judgement of his intellectual superiors will not so readily accept the opinions of the artistically better informed.

Then, it is by no means easy to persuade the artistically uneducated that there is any need for education. He thinks that the enjoyable aspects of art are fairly obvious and that there is no point in looking beyond the obvious unless he is seeking for some extra-artistic element—some intellectual or spiritual value. As he is only seeking enjoyment, why should he waste time looking for anything else? It must, therefore, be made quite clear to him that the chief aim of the educationist is to increase his pleasure in art and that there is no ulterior motive. Unfortunately the methods of many teachers (and here I include all publicists and would-be popularizers) are not such as to give this impression.

Much teaching has been misguided. For example, for some obscure reason critics

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and teachers frequently fail to discriminate between the "absolute" and the "historical" value of the classics. They delight in praising work which has little claim to our interest other than its antiquity. They confront the bewildered seeker for enjoyable beauty with volumes of extracts from "The Great Writers", collections of the Hundred Best Books, etc., than which nothing more ungodly, more dreary, uninspired, unworthy, and unbeautiful could possibly be found. They should know better, these people! Why will they do it? Almost as bad are those who go to the opposite extreme and hail with acclamation the newest, most unintelligible phantasies born of a craving for novelty.

I am not exaggerating, though certainly the position is improving wonderfully. But, of the books written twenty years ago and earlier with the presumable intention of stimulating interest in literature and art, certainly half would have antagonized the ordinary man—had he bothered about them at all, which he didn't. The critic may say that he is not concerned with improving the taste of the man in the street.

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Undoubtedly he has other tasks besides those of the popularizer ; much of his work can appeal only to the artistically educated and it would be dangerous for him to devote an undue share of his energies to this work. Nevertheless, he should more often cast aside the highbrow attitude and any idea that the needs of the ordinary man are unworthy of his consideration. The example, in the realms of science, of such men as J. A. Thomson, Lankester, and others equally unlikely to devote their energies to any but a good cause, should help to dispel this illusion. We badly need writers who, without being namby-pamby, superior, or academic, can help the man with the germ of interest, writers who can point to the ascending steps in the ladder of taste. Theirs is not an easy task. In the first place, they must be *themselves* interesting, for only a minority are willing to read books with an ulterior motive. The actual popularizing books must provide recreation and enjoyment as well as stimulation.

In this connection it might be remarked that we are too ready to throw stones at the writer who tries to bring his literary abilities within the range of a wide public.

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He is accused of playing to the gallery, of prostituting his art, of thinking of his royalties, and so on. Might not a writer capable of attaining heights on which only a minority could join him be rendering a better service to humanity at large by sometimes choosing to give the majority the best they can appreciate? And the competent conscientious workmen who, though they may not hope or desire to rank with the greatest, give the public something which it desires and understands, and which is nevertheless much better than anything else of the same kind that it would read, render a finer service than we are willing to admit.

Secondly, the popularizer must not rob his public of its self-respect or unduly destroy its faith in its own judgment in artistic matters. To do so is to open up another source of prejudice and to raise a fresh obstacle to enjoyment, for he who loses faith in his own opinions, who is told that he should put no trust in his own judgment, endeavours to embrace the artistic standards of others. This he cannot do, but he begins to read books, and so on, from a sense of duty—because he has been told that everybody ought to

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read so and so—and then to become a liar and a hypocrite, to pretend to others that he enjoys books when he doesn't, to imagine to himself that he does when he doesn't, so wasting his opportunities and stunting his latent capabilities. With the right kind of education his tastes and opinions would improve gradually and without his noticing the difference. Although his taste would be improving, all the time he would be following his own judgment, and so he would always enjoy his contact with art.

The popularizer who would approach the subject in the most fruitful way will realize that the lower forms of art are purely recreational—excepting of course that some activities have physical values also. The ethical, spiritual, and intellectual aspects are not developed until we reach a higher level. Therefore, if he is going to lead to better things any one to whom art has been synonymous with pure recreation, he must do so by utilizing the recreative element in the better. For example, the educated reader seeks in Shakespeare the statement of philosophical and moral ideas, beauty of language and aptness of phraseology, the delineation of

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character, and the like. But what is the good of pointing out these qualities to a man as a reason why he should go to a Shakespearian performance rather than to a farce or a melodrama, to one who is, as yet, only seeking recreation? Tell him instead that *Twelfth Night* is a good farce and *Macbeth* a good melodrama—as they undoubtedly are; rid his head of the idea that Shakespeare is primarily something else, something much more “brainy” and stodgy; try to instil in him the motive that filled the old Globe with an audience which is the exact counterpart of our own uneducated pleasure-seeking theatre-goers, and Shakespeare would become more popular. Contact with his work would undoubtedly improve taste and the appreciation of Shakespeare’s other qualities. Shakespeare was popular in his own time because he enjoyed the reputation of being a good entertainer. He isn’t popular to-day because the average man has been taught by misguided people to regard him as a great writer. Of course there are other reasons, but that is a most important one.

Yet another cause of low taste is the prevalent lack of the ability to concentrate.

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Enjoyment of the better types of art involves concentration, not only because it must be cumulative, but also because great art is generally built round an ampler theme than that which is of only temporary appeal. If the artist deals with a big subject, he must have room. If he avoids substance, he economizes, condenses, and concentrates his production. Whichever course he adopts, the reader or spectator must give him greater—either more extended or more intense—attention may-be both.

Education will improve powers of concentration ; but, on the other hand, it depends upon this ability. Therefore the psychological factor must be considered by all educationists. They must prepare ladders leading by easy stages from the purely enjoyable and insignificant to the serious and significant, but it is not enough that the steps should involve only gradual intellectual and aesthetic progress. They must require also only a gradual increase in concentration.

The chief aim of education and popularization must be, however, to increase the realization of the function of art—which is (though art may fulfil other purposes) to provide enjoyment, enjoyment in its

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highest, most spiritual form may-be, yet nevertheless enjoyment. For the pursuit of art is the pursuit of the beautiful, especially the beautiful which is of man's creation. If this pursuit cannot give pleasure, the fault must be ours, since the "beautiful" which cannot give pleasure to any is not beautiful. The converse, that anything which gives pleasure is beautiful, is certainly *not* true, but, whatever our philosophical or moral criteria of beauty may be, they must include the pleasure giving property.

We need, nevertheless, to question ourselves whether this factor is not only ignored but sometimes even suppressed by some educationists. There are so many things in this world of imperfectly developed men and women that give pleasure and are most unbeautiful, that we hesitate to class our precious goods in the same category lest they be tarred with the same brush. Yet we must do so. There is much that goes by the name of Love which is but lust, greed, pride of possession, avarice, habit, perversion, and waste, but we are not tempted to pretend that genuine human affection is not love because it is something better than the

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rest. So we must not be tempted to deny that art is essentially a source of pleasure simply because it is the source of the finest, most lasting, pleasure. To do so is to alienate those who are most in need of its influence.

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VIII

The second need—after education—is to make good art more accessible. We have seen that, so long as the supply of art is a commercial proposition, little, if any, improvement in its average quality can be expected. Until, in some way, the good can be given the same chance as the bad, the majority will continue to clamour for the bad, since it will be the only thing they know. It seems, therefore, that the only effective way to break the vicious circle is to try to put art-provision as far as possible upon a non-commercial basis. We must not be over-optimistic. Not a great deal can be done at present, and, in any case, progress will be slow.

The only way in which this can be done is "co-operation"—firstly the co-operation of individuals associated only for this purpose, and secondly that co-operation which is implied in all State or community action. Let us deal with the first and most fruitful, to begin with.

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Let us not, may it be repeated, forge that the extent of co-operative activity is limited by present desire and in exactly the same way as the commercial activity. Even co-operative undertakings must pay their way. The difference is three-fold, however. Firstly, the business entertainment provider devotes his energies to those activities which make the greatest *quantitative* appeal. He does not ask: "Shall I attract enough people to make this pay its way?"—but instead, as a rule, he asks which production will attract *most* people and produce most profit. It is nevertheless obvious that because a play, for example, is not likely to be a popular success, or an artiste a star, or a programme superlatively attractive, it is not right to assume that these would not merit and receive sufficient support to cover expenses. From ten plays (or ten musical programmes), one of which should succeed in a business sense of the word and nine of which would only pay their way, the commercial man naturally chooses the former. The other nine are *never chosen*, unless unintentionally. Yet some of them might be works of greater artistic merit. It is the business of co-operative activities

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to select and to produce works of worth which belong to the latter category. The art-life of the community would gain from this in two ways: (a) since the tastes of the majority are low, the nine unproduced works will almost certainly include some of higher artistic value; and (b) there will be greater variety.

Secondly, the selection of the works to be produced is made by the business-man and not by the consumer. The business-man will object to this statement, saying that his selection is dictated by public demands; but it isn't. In the first place, the public, whether popular or other works are concerned, has no power to select at all; it can only take or leave what is offered, which is a very different thing, leading at the best to incomplete satisfaction and at the worst to considerable waste. In the second place, the business-man selects not according to popular demands but according to *his ideas* of popular demand—again a different matter. If it were not, he would not suffer so many financial failures, for which the public has to pay in several ways, such as higher prices, lower quality, conservatism, etc.

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In the third place, the commercial provider is in competition with all his fellows. Each seeks to attract the biggest crowd, and to do so indulges in the "star system", in spectacular but not necessarily artistic production, in expensive advertising, and so on. All of these increase the price of the production without in any way improving its artistic or recreative value.

Co-operation in this matter involves the organization of Societies. These may be quite small, e.g. Chamber-music groups, each of whose members performs, dramatic reading-circles only large enough to provide the casts—or on a large scale, e.g. the important Folk or Community Theatres, the larger Music Clubs. The size of the Society would determine the kind of work to be done, and would depend largely upon local conditions. However big or small it may be, it would nevertheless find suitable and desirable activities within its compass. Neither need—nor in fact very often should—these Societies be "performing" Societies, but, instead, "enjoying" Societies. By a performing Society I mean one where the play or the music is performed by members

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of the group, with the result that the practical or personal side is apt to become more important than any other. The Music Clubs (of which there are several, and should be more) on the other hand employ professional players—the only real differences so far as the audience (of members) is concerned between their own and ordinary commercial concerts are that they receive better value for their money, can hear works which would not otherwise be performed, and have some voice in the selection of programmes. If the best results are to be attained, co-operative art must make full use of the professional. Amateur art has its limitations, and in any case demands the expenditure on practical matters of energy which could be better spent in other directions. Furthermore, the resources of any amateur group are limited. Thus, an Orchestral Society which gave a monthly concert would be an exception, and one orchestral concert per month is not sufficient to satisfy a genuine music-loving community. The co-operative organizations would, with probable advantage, eliminate much that was not absolutely essential, e.g. their staging of

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plays would be as simple as possible : otherwise there is no reason why their standard of production should be below that of the commercial enterprise. In fact, it would probably show more all-round excellence and better balance and ensemble.

Probably the genuine artist-professionals would sooner work for such Societies than for ordinary managers. They would, with a sufficiency of Societies, earn as good a living and be more secure. They would have more scope for developing their finer talents, a wider range of art to interpret, and more intelligent, more enthusiastic, audiences.

The possibilities of the other form of co-operation noticed before, though great, will probably not be so fruitful. The State and Local Government groups are very largely co-operative undertakings, their function being to provide services which could not be given either at all or so cheaply or efficiently without official organization. Some of these services could, theoretically if not practically, be rendered as well by private combinations. The extent of the activities of the State is decided by the wishes of the majority,

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and, if the majority desired that the State should engage in the dissemination of art, there is no reason why it should not do so. In fact, it does by maintaining art-galleries, museums, and libraries (in England) and by subsidizing theatres, opera-houses, and conservatoires (in other countries). There are some who would see the artistic activities of the State extended.

There is much to be said both for and against this idea. On the one side, it is arguable that State activities would be largely educational and that it is just as desirable that people should be helped to enjoy life as to succeed in other directions. This is perfectly true, and, so long as the educational ideal is kept in sight, State assistance is thoroughly justified. On the other hand, though the majority of taxpayers agree that education is desirable, they do not all agree that the finest art should be promoted at their expense. In other words, non-essentially educational activities would not be justifiable unless they were provided for, and at the request of, the majority ; and, well, we have seen that the majority do *not* seek the best. Therefore I feel that those who urge the

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subsidizing of theatres and the like would be better advised to turn their attention to the other type of co-operative enterprise. They might otherwise antagonize the average man and do harm to the educational possibilities of the State organizations.

The museum is, of course, largely educational and not entirely or even largely artistic in its aims. It and the art-gallery are also in a very different position from such activities as the subsidized theatre because they are devoted to the unique object—the specimen or the picture—which *must* be in the hands of the State if it is to be available to all. There is no alternative to the public ownership of museums and art-galleries. The public library, though it does not deal with the unique, is in another way in a different category, since it, alone of all State provisions, can give something to all men. Those who do not desire good literature can obtain some other service—books on business, science, sport, etc., recreative reading, and so on *ad infinitum*—in return for their contribution towards its upkeep. The public library, by appealing to all men, brings together a multitude of interests and provides unlimited oppor-

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tunities for the awakening of new ideas. At the library alone is the good made as easily accessible as the indifferent, and the very fact that they are to be found in the same place is an educational factor of great significance. The man who does not want good pictures or good plays has no need to come into contact with them, and remains outside their influence. On the shelves of a library books of all degrees of excellence and worthlessness (within limits) are side by side so that even mere luck or too hasty selection may lead to better tastes or fresh interests being acquired. Therefore the library is an institution to be encouraged.

Frankly I believe the remedy to lie in the hands of those who want good art. None of these now can get as much of it as they desire; most enjoy only a small portion. If people set to work to provide for themselves so that, instead, a large part of their artistic desires was satisfied, they would so do a great deal to improve the average tastes of the community, since the membership of a healthy organization always increases. Of course they must avoid the insidious desire, which has wrecked many repertory enterprises, to

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attract outsiders, and must never forget that the function of the Societies is the quite selfish one of supplying their own needs. They, too, must be prepared to cut their cloth accordingly. It is the desire to do more than the means of the actual membership permits that leads to attempts to curry popular favour "to help to balance things". By so doing they put themselves on the same footing as the commercial man, must take the same risks, and suffer the same failures—and these are liable to be more disastrous since Societies lack what little knowledge of popular tastes the commercial man possesses.

With sufficient organization and the co-operation of co-operative units there is no reason why in time they should not be able to undertake any feasible artistic enterprise. The music-lovers in at least six towns in England could to-day with proper co-operation maintain a permanent orchestra and the theatre-goers an intelligent adequate playhouse, and all towns by grouping could do the same—so far as the orchestra is concerned, at least.

These things have been tried and failed, I will be told. To this, if it be

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true, there are only two answers—the world has progressed only by successive trials and failures ; if the first failure had effectually damped the ardour of our ancestors we should still be savages—and, if these enterprises fail really from lack of desire for them and not because of indifference, which can in time be removed, the artistic level of the day must be much lower than even a semi-pessimist like the writer dares to imagine.

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IX

We cannot close even a brief essay without some reference to the effect of some other mechanical devices, such as the gramophone, the piano-player, and wireless, and a note on that all important subject, commercial art.

The appreciation of no art shows such great possibilities of expansion in the near future as music. During the last few years it has been released from its most irksome bonds and is now just beginning to stretch its limbs. For technique has been the curse of music, and now it is becoming possible to gain enjoyment without exercising one's executive and interpretive powers.

Musicians are of two classes—executive and appreciative—those who perform and those who listen. True enjoyment of music belongs to the latter, just as true enjoyment of books, of pictures, of plays is the reward of the reader and the spectator—not of the writer, the painter,

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the actor, or the composer. *Their* joy is of another order—it is the joy of creation.

Without the assistance of modern mechanical aids the music-lover had either to listen to the music-making of his friends or of players at a concert, or he had to attempt to interpret for himself. The first was inconvenient and unsatisfactory. The selection of music was not his own but that of others; the time and place were not of his choosing. The alternative was even worse, since his appreciation was limited by his interpretive powers and marred by his deficiencies. The owner of a modern player-piano has the whole world of piano-music and a wealth of arrangements at his command. Even the lover of orchestral, instrumental, or vocal music has access, through the gramophone and the wireless, to a passable substitute for the real thing.

What effect will this have upon piano-forte-music? In the first place, we shall gradually rid ourselves of misplaced pride in the amateur's very limited technical powers. We shall no longer praise So and So for being able to play Chopin's *Studies* after a fashion, but shall

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consider him either a fool for wasting his time trying when he could much more easily enjoy Cortot's performance of them, or sympathize with the poverty that prevents his purchasing this mechanical aid. Secondly, we shall not waste time and kill natural love of music by the dreary routine of "teaching the piano." Instead, we shall teach appreciation. If all the energy spent in acquiring a very inadequate technique were diverted to the real business of appreciation, we should be a more musical nation. Thirdly, we shall cease to tolerate the incompetent player now so often foisted upon us or even sought for want of any better, and the ostentatious "virtuoso" executant.

Before very long the piano-player will cost no more than an ordinary piano; in fact the ordinary instrument will no longer be manufactured. In our schools "piano-playing" will be erased from the curriculum and classes in appreciation substituted.

But what about non-pianoforte music? There is a big difference. While the piano-player produces exactly the same kind of musical tone as the hand-played instrument, the gramophone, or the wireless,

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does not reproduce at all exactly the timbre, quality or volume of the instruments recorded. It provides not the real thing but a substitute, which, though excellent, can never be entirely satisfactory. We do not care to assert dogmatically what science will or will not make possible in the future; at least, however, it is extremely doubtful that a mechanical violin as adequate as the mechanical piano will ever be invented. Wind instruments depend less upon human manipulation—the organ, for instance, is nothing but an imperfect essay in this direction. This is but idle speculation, however. As a practical proposition we may say that the perfect mechanical reproduction of music will be confined to the pianoforte.

So we are left with these problems. Shall we be tempted to seek the shadow and lose the substance—listen in often, but never attend an orchestral or chamber concert or a violin or vocal recital? The chances are that we shall, unless opportunities to enjoy the latter are greater than at present. Considerable loss would result. The ears of the next generation would become attuned to a diminished

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variety of tonal experiences, for one thing. For another, the psychological, even physical effects of large gradations in the volume of tone, such as can be experienced only in the concert-room, should not willingly be relinquished. And, again, it is not by any means the same thing to listen to music in the company of others, in the atmosphere of the concert-room, as it is to enjoy music in solitude. We may sometimes prefer the latter, but that fact does not remove the difference.

The second problem is that, though there is little physical or moral good to be found in solo instrumental playing, such good *does* result from singing and partaking in concerted music. There is no good reason why we should play the piano—rather than listen to it; but there are many reasons why we should sing or play in chamber or orchestral music. By all means let us listen to more music of all kinds; increased facilities for listening should not, however, decrease our desire to perform when performance can benefit us.

Taking all these considerations together we may assume:

(1) that pianoforte *playing* will decline

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though much more pianoforte music will be enjoyed.

(2) that much of the practical energy now devoted to the pianoforte will be directed to the study of other instruments.

(3) that, unless our musical life is to increase in volume but diminish in quality, more and not less concert-going and concerted instrumental playing and choral singing must be provided.

Books, music, pictures, sculpture, however, minister to only a small part of the artistic needs of the community. By far the most widespread, though not necessarily the most valuable, art-products are those which we may describe as commercial, or industrial, or, better, "applied" art. Only a minority, even in this age, concern themselves with the first-named, but we all wear clothes, use furniture, live, work, play, and worship in buildings, eat and drink out of vessels, and so on, through every one of our daily occupations. Into each of these art can, does, and must enter. We may wear clothes to keep us warm, but they must be either ugly or otherwise—their existence implies artistic properties, negative or positive. If they are ugly, we cannot avoid their ugliness,

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though it may dull our appreciative faculties. Of course this is true of all things. Every object, every occurrence almost, has its artistic aspect. With every manufactured article, every human production, however, this artistic quality is within our control. When we make a cup, a hat, or a church, we can make it as beautiful or as ugly as we like, subject to certain limitations, some of them real, some imaginary. But we must be sufficiently interested in its artistic value. It will seldom exist spontaneously, without conscious effort.

That is, of course, the first and most powerful limitation. *Often we don't care.* And so long as we don't care we shall receive only according to our deserts. For the second limitation is that manufactured goods are intended primarily for utility, and the incentive for their production is profit. So long as we are content to take the ugly but useful, so long as our artistic discrimination does not give added commercial value to the beautiful, we can have no right to expect the manufacturer to bother. He is not an apostle of art, but a business-man. If we show him, as a business-man, that we desire a well-

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proportioned jug and will refuse to buy a clumsy one, he will, acting on business principles, supply the saleable article. So far the remedy is in our own hands. Thirdly, many manufacturers have an unjustifiably low opinion of public taste, and honestly believe that the majority like tawdry things when, in truth, they accept them for want of anything better or because they are cheaper.

Fourthly, however, *when* there is sufficient desire for the beautiful it need not cost any more, but *until* there is, it *will*, since, it will be produced in response to a minority demand. This is a much more serious limitation than it should be, for several reasons.

(1) Popular taste has, since the initiation of the industrial era, steadily improved, but the artistic standard of manufacturers is at least a stage behind. There are at least two causes for this: (a) the manufacturer can judge popular taste only by experiment, and this is, on the average, bound to involve expense, and (b) when the machinery and processes of manufacture are well established and smoothly running, changes must entail extra costs and reorganization, ranging

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from the installation of fresh plant to the employment of new designs. For this reason alone the more artistic article must cost more, excepting in those industries (such as the manufacture of dress-material) where change and fashion are normal conditions. In other industries where the product is less subject to variation (e.g. pottery—a firm could produce and sell exactly the same cups and saucers for an unlimited period), the extra cost is necessarily more to be expected.

(2) The manufacturer may, and alas too often does, appreciate the commercial value of beauty and *trades* upon it. That is to say, he manufactures ugly wall-paper and pleasant wall-paper, at practically the same cost. He *could* be content to make the normal profit from both, but he realizes that many people don't want to disfigure their walls and will pay more for a pleasing design. He makes them do so, since this behaviour is profitable to him. In this he cannot be censured—rather should we praise him for not doing it more often. Nevertheless, such action will be a drag upon artistic progress, and if it can be prevented at all even the manufacturer in the long run will benefit.

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Let all who can afford the more beautiful production purchase it, but let them pay the extra price under protest. The manufacturer must be made to realize that it is anti-social to make a profit out of beauty, when by so doing he condemns the less fortunate man to suffer the ugly. As the business-man is at heart as much interested as any other person in the welfare of his fellow-men, this might have some influence. And an independent inquiry (conducted by, say, a group of art-students or a University) might achieve a little. They would try to show us—if they could—why a fabric which is disfigured by a vile design can be cheaper than a plain unprinted cloth, why there is truth in the saying we all hear frequently, "Oh, yes, you all admire the plain, simple costume or frock, but it's so much more expensive, you know," and the like.

Fifthly, industrial designers have not received due recognition and are not well organized in relation to the industries. The designer is not always as well acquainted with the special qualities and limitations of the material to which his designs are to be applied as he might be; the manufacturer does not often

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enough realize the importance of the designer ; and the young artist is apt to despise design—naturally, because personal public recognition is never awarded to the designer—and the best men prefer more pretentious if more precarious fields. These shortcomings would, however, be removed as a matter of course were the other limitations to be removed.

Great improvements in industrial art cannot, however, be expected until the general education and artistic appreciation of the public has developed. Applied art will always move more slowly than fine art, since the utility-factor will ever bring about a conflict of expediency versus ideals.

Architecture presents special difficulties, because it is at once aggressive and unavoidable, and because it depends upon environment. In other words, though we may, if we can afford, eschew the ugly pot, tawdry furniture, and (so far at least as our indoor life is concerned) garish clothing, we cannot avoid buildings. They form a large part of our environment and influence our mental and bodily health. Those who live in dirty, flat-fronted, unbroken streets have to resist

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actively their environment if they would avoid dirty, drab, monotonous lives. Those who daily traverse roads consisting of disorderly jumbles of architectural misfits lose the sense of serenity, order, and fitness they might gain in happier surroundings. The second of the points mentioned before is that no building can be judged apart from its surroundings. An essential of every work of art is that its parts shall form a well-balanced whole, each detail being subordinated to the general effect, which must convey a sense of completeness. Now, until recently we have (with occasional exceptions) failed to realize that the unit of architecture, so far as outward appearance is concerned, is not the individual building but the whole street, everything, in fact, which is in view from any one point. No one would suggest that the wall of a picture-gallery was artistic because the individual pictures were good, and yet, although much more care and artistry is devoted to hanging pictures than is spent in arranging the contiguity of buildings, we seem to be quite satisfied with haphazard town-planning. Yet all who sorrow at the wilful waste and

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destruction of the beautiful must lament when they see, as they must often do, noble and beautiful edifices or the simple but refined works of architects, who as a rule devote more love and receive less incentive than any other art workers, ruined by their surroundings.

But how, one may ask, can this be avoided? Adjoining plots of land may belong to different owners, contiguous buildings are built for different purposes, by those with much or little to spend, designed by different architects—how can one expect them to conform to one artistic scheme? Perhaps that is too much to expect. Can we even ask that they should not be violently opposed to one another, not mutually destructive? Yes. But this can be secured in only one way. Local authorities must be given, or must take upon themselves, the duty of controlling building operations in all public places. They would not, and could not, be arbitrary: they would need to consider many difficulties, and they could not rightly impose any restrictions which would make the construction of suitable premises impossible within the reasonable means of those for whom they were

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being built. All they could undertake would be to co-ordinate proposed work, to advise, and to prohibit flagrant affronts to public good taste. Let a local committee composed of the best architects and the hardest-headed business-men in the town, with a disinterested man of taste—a parson, a farmer, a writer—as chairman, be formed. Much good could be done in this way.

In domestic architecture we cannot expect much attention to be given to artistic matters in these days when it is difficult to obtain a sufficiency of houses of any kind. Nevertheless, there is one suggestion with great practical possibilities. It is that of the novelist Mr. J. J. Connington, who proposes that instead of standardization of design small parts capable of being erected in a large number of ways should be standardized. The readers who are interested are referred to *Nordenholt's Million* for further particulars of this most interesting idea.

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X

The most significant tendency of art and the greatest danger, which operates in all fields, is, therefore, that commercialism, mass-production, standardization, and the heeding of large volumes of demand will lead to an increase in the quantity of art-production but a decrease in the average of its quality, unless the evils of the system are counteracted by certain developments, the chief of which are education, co-operation, and the birth of a new attitude with regard to art-ideals.

Our attitude towards the arts must lead us to relate them more closely to our other interests and, as a corollary, the different kinds and different values of artistic enjoyment must be synthesized. We desire neither to set art upon a pedestal of superiority nor to despise it as a recreative frivolity. We need to realize on the one hand that all human activities possess of a necessity positive or negative artistic significance which we cannot avoid; even though we consciously ignore art,

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we are subconsciously and indirectly influenced. Further, we cannot disregard the close economic relationship between the artistic and the merely utilitarian.

We have seen something, but only one aspect, of this when discussing applied art; the relation is wider than this, since, for example, the amount of time, energy, money, and material available for artistic purposes is closely connected with material economic conditions. And, still further, there is the psychological or spiritual element, art satisfying human needs which are unsatisfied by other activities, supplementing, filling the gaps in our personal development. We cannot put art into a watertight compartment. The extent to which art appeals to an individual, and the particular way in which and the special medium through which artistic impulses find expression, will depend very largely upon biological and social factors, upon the materially ordered associations of the individual, his work, his health, everything that impinges upon his life. Further research will expose the fundamental reasons for this, but even now we realize that a love of dancing, of the theatre, of poetry, of sculpture is not

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a mere gift or genius or taste or predilection but also something which is fostered and directed by material environment. Confronted with this realization, we must regard art as an inseparable organic element in life, not as a superimposed culture which may or may not exist in any individual or take any form.

And the corollary of this, as said before, is that, since artistic potentialities exist in all men according to their being and environment, the realm of art will present as large a variety of values, types, and manifestations as does our life itself. Yet all these manifestations are part of one. Good, bad, or indifferent, they represent the best, most suitable art that different men at any time are capable of appreciating or desirous of cultivating. This is the excuse for our plea for broadmindedness.

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

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